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ABSTRACT

Findings and recommendations compose the two sections of this summary of A Study of the Organization and Governance of Alabama Library Systems. The findings indicate the need for a central coordinating state library agency with multi-type library concerns that could strengthen the role of other state agencies concerned with library development. In light of these findings, the approach appearing most favorable to Alabama, which would provide better library service to the people in a cost-effective fashion, involves the voluntary creation of self-governing cooperatives composed of all types of libraries, which would be aided by state funds based on negotiated program agreements. Recommendations for implementing these ideas are provided--specifically, those concerning a general plan for cooperative library systems, including necessary legislative changes and organizational aspects, as well as those for cooperative systems of different kinds of libraries: academic, public, school, and special. Charts of the proposed organization for both interlibrary cooperation at the state level and a district library system are included. (JD)

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SUMMARY
OF A
STUDY OF ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE
OF
ALABAMA STATE LIBRARY SYSTEMS

May, 1978

Prepared for the

Alabama Public Library Service
State of Alabama
Montgomery, Alabama

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SUMMARY
OF A STUDY OF THE ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE
OF ALABAMA LIBRARY SYSTEMS

This study has as its primary purpose the formulation of recommendations to the Alabama Public Library Service and its advisory bodies for a model of organization and funding of multitype library cooperation in Alabama including changes in state library legislation and related regulations.

The diverse sponsorship of libraries in Alabama, both at the local and state levels, and the differences of purpose, methods, and clientele stemming therefrom, as well as other factors, such as geography, are major features of library service which give rise to the need for interlibrary cooperation. Such cooperation is both more feasible and desirable than reorganization to centralize library operations. The concept of libraries as auxiliary to schools and colleges, for example, is not only valid, but too traditional to conceive of these libraries as reporting to one central library authority rather than the educational institutions they serve primarily. Public libraries, too, are linked by long tradition and reasonable public policy to their respective city and county governments.

In addition to the need for cooperation arising from diverse library sponsorship, other factors such as technological advances in library science, improved communications, vastly expanded publication, and growing user needs have made interlibrary cooperation more feasible and attractive. How may it best be accomplished?

The libraries of Alabama have ample contractual authority to participate fully and voluntarily in organized cooperative arrangements from which they receive benefits equal to their contributions. However, experience in many, if not all, states has amply demonstrated that interagency cooperation on a large scale does not flourish, and indeed is rarely undertaken, if it must be based on contractual considerations in which cost/benefit relations are difficult to establish, as in this case. On the other hand, outside funding in whole or in part makes cooperation feasible through agreement, while still preserving the autonomy and discretion of the participants. This approach, therefore, is not only a viable one for Alabama libraries, it is preferable.

Following are major findings regarding organization at the state level for library support and the establishment of cooperative library systems.

1. The need for a central coordinating state library agency at the state level has increased in recent decades and now reached the point of urgency in order to satisfy public needs.

2. A state library agency, properly organized, should not diminish but rather strengthen the role of other state agencies concerned with library development.

3. The creation of a state library agency with multi-type library concerns would be in accord with national library policy and trends in other states with the goal of an effective cooperative pattern of intrastate, interstate, and state-national relationships.

4. Library service to the people would be greatly enhanced, in cost-effective fashion, through voluntary, self-governed cooperatives composed of all types of libraries, aided by state funds based on negotiated program agreements.

Responding to the above findings, the following recommendations are deemed most essential in enabling libraries to meet increasingly urgent needs.

1. The Alabama Public Library Service should be redesignated the Alabama State Library with responsibility for coordinating and funding multitype library cooperation.

2. An executive board of five members appointed by the governor should continue to direct the redesignated organization.

3. The other state agencies with board responsibilities for other libraries, especially the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education, should be fully involved in policy formulation related to cooperatives.

4. The academic, public, school, and special libraries in the state should be encouraged to join together voluntarily in cooperatives, and to administer said cooperatives, in collaboration with the Alabama State Library and with the participation of other interested state authorities.

This summary of the full study is divided hereafter into two sections: (1) Discussion and Findings, and (2) Major Recommendations. The reader is invited to consult the complete study on any point of question. The full study also includes drafts of proposed legislative changes, rules and regulations for the State Library, and cooperative system bylaws. As a whole they are intended to establish, upon adoption, a sound and practical intergovernmental relationship for unleashing the full potential of libraries to meet the needs of the society they serve. In short, the objective is to provide the most favorable organizational foundation possible for developing library services under current and foreseeable conditions.

Discussion and Findings

The library resources of the State, while considerable and growing, have not been matched by sufficiently effective means to place them readily at the disposal of the public. Therefore, in initiating this study it was proposed to examine how future library development might be furthered through interlibrary cooperation formally organized and adequately funded. Further, it was postulated that no type of library should be denied the opportunity to participate in these endeavors, including their planning and direction.

In examining current library organization, programs, and cooperative procedures, which constitute the base on which future programs must be built, relevant information was obtained on all types of libraries with particular inquiry into the status of public libraries because of their pressing problems of organization, funding, and service levels.

In carrying out the study, the consultant was extended the cooperation of libraries throughout the State and of the state agencies supporting libraries.

The Growth and Organization of Alabama's Libraries In a Changing Environment

The dispersion of library sponsorship has tended to obscure the degree to which libraries as a whole have advanced in Alabama. Global data have rarely and only very partially been assembled. Actually, there are over 20

million volumes available to Alabama citizens generally or special clientele. Annual book acquisitions are greater than one million, more than five percent of the total collection. The number of library outlets, including branches and departmental collections, exceed 1,700. The physical plant to house the collections have an estimated replacement value of more than $214 million, and annual library operating costs are estimated to exceed $60 million. In short, libraries collectively have become an area of major concern and importance in the formulation of public policy.

A level of service to Alabama citizens consistent with other public services within the State does not appear to have been reached. Existing shortcomings in the development of libraries appear to stem in part from the generally isolated and uncoordinated approach to library planning and the lack of formal machinery enabling libraries to work more cooperatively with each other.

Therefore, the alternatives through which interlibrary activities will enable Alabama's libraries to make important new progress in patron service are the central theme of this study. An imposed system of library coordination, centrally directed, even if acceptable to a majority of libraries and their sponsoring agencies, would create many more problems than would be solved, and is an alternative rejected at the outset. The other obvious alternative, with possible variations, is that of voluntary cooperation through self-governing arrangement, thereby preserving the values of present organizational sponsorship and discretion while gaining the advantages of unified force, namely, a collective voice to speak for the entire library effort, and the arrangement and use of library resources to give authority to that voice.

Library technology and cooperative concepts have substantially antedated truly effective means for interlibrary cooperation. The principal factors appearing to have restrained more general, enduring, and intensive interlibrary cooperation in Alabama are an inadequate legal and structural basis, an absence of central financial assistance, and partial and parochial viewpoints held by some members of the library community stemming almost certainly from the relative isolation imposed by current organization.

In view of the history of library development in the State, and the need to provide a means for total library development while preserving all the advantages of the current independent library authorities, the study has asked the following questions with respect to each potential proposal for a cooperative organizational arrangement:

1. Do requirements for library participation uphold the principle of cooperation?
2. Is membership open to all types of libraries on a voluntary basis?
3. Is the autonomy of each library preserved?
4. Does it provide that the member libraries shall govern the system, and not the system the libraries?
5. Does it give a fully effective participatory role to the librarians, especially to the library directors?
6. Does it give lay boards, representing the sponsoring agencies of libraries, a workable practical role in overall governance and policy decisions?
7. Is the relationship of systems and the state library one in which each may exercise a desirable but not excessive degree of influence?
8. Does it respect the traditional state-local relationships of academic, public, and school libraries?
9. Does it provide an adequate means for cooperative planning and administration?
10. Is the plan for financial support sound?

For a cooperative plan to be workable and acceptable to everyone concerned, it is a conclusion of this study that an affirmative answer should be given to each of the above questions. In the recommendations of this study this has been done.

The Physical, Cultural, and Economic Characteristics of Alabama

The surge of demand for library services in Alabama is related to its steady and rapid growth, higher educational levels, urbanization, a shift to an industrial and scientific economy, and an increase in technological and educational specialties, as well as to the dramatic increase in knowledge availability in America.

It has been estimated that the 1970 Alabama population of 3,444,165 will increase to 4,649,700 by 2020. This may prove to be conservative. An increasing density of population tends to create demands for library service beyond the mere percentage of growth, especially when the increase is in urban areas. Unlike some states, Alabama has 10 or 12 important urban areas, which are not excessively overshadowed by one or two.

Formal educational levels have greatly increased in the State, a factor thought to be more influential in the significant increase in library requirements than the growth in population. As one example, the percentage of persons 25 years or older who have completed eight or more years of school has been doubled since 1940.

Of particular significance to the future of libraries in the State, the recent rate of growth of per capita income in Alabama (1970-1976) exceeded not only that of the country as a whole but of the average of the other fast-growing states of the southeast.

The physical and climatic conditions of the State, and the means of communication are all favorable to a consistently high rate of library utilization and to effective interlibrary cooperation.

In summary, all these factors are positive for the vocational, cultural, intellectual, and social advancement of the people of Alabama and point to the need for their support by good library service.

The Governmental Setting for Libraries in Alabama

In the early years of development libraries were established in municipalities, schools, and colleges without the involvement of the State of Alabama, in most instances, beyond simple enabling legislation. As need grew for

improved and more consistent standards of public service, the State began to assist and ultimately, through the efforts of Alabama's representatives in the Congress, the federal government also began to support the State's efforts.

Alabama's strongest early efforts were directed toward public libraries, beginning in 1907. Ultimately the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) evolved an independent agency headed by a board of five persons named by the Governor. Initially and principally concerned with the development of public libraries, APLS was gradually given broader responsibilties with respect to federally funded programs, and consequently the major role of state government in interlibrary affairs. Nevertheless, current state legislation prevents the agency from undertaking broad support of cooperative initiatives undertaken between libraries other than public (municipal).

The next important role of the state government evolved as support of libraries in the public schools. In 1938 the Department of Education created a position of school library consultant, following which the growth of school libraries progressed steadily to the currently advanced position. Ultimately federal aid for school library programs was channeled through the Department, adding to the importance of the state function and the rate of improvement.

Until recently academic libraries in the public colleges and universities were not substantively represented on the state level. In the mid-1960's the Department of Education assumed a coordinating role for two-year colleges. In 1969 the Commission on Higher Education was established, with broad responsibilities in higher education. Academic libraries, with their strong resources, thus became a concern of these two agencies as part of the total educational programs of the institutions of higher learning.

Additionally, numerous state agencies and institutions possess libraries, some created by law, including the Department of Archives and History, and the Supreme Court and State Law Library.

Library organization in Alabama is fragmented among many types of sponsoring governments and governmental agencies. Libraries sponsored by government include 180 by cities and counties, 127 by school systems, 54 by colleges and universities, and others by agencies of the state and federal governments. There are also important privately sponsored libraries. Currently

no comprehensive cooperative arrangements exist among these libraries. Instead, cooperation tends to be informal and limited in scope.

All Alabama libraries, governmental and private, have authority to cooperate by agreement with other libraries to a degree corresponding with benefits received on behalf of their "own" patrons as defined by law or corporate purpose. However, no library agency, including the Alabama Public Library Service, currently possesses comprehensive authority to assist all libraries for cooperative purposes.

Experience has indicated that widespread cooperation among independent entities requires a coordinating structure adequately financed. If the State of Alabama should create such a facilitating arrangement, the libraries of the State already possess the contractual authority necessary to participate. This means that the citizens of Alabama can be given vastly improved access to the present large and growing total library resources of the State, rather than the current generally limited or cumbersome access, if new and effective organizational means are provided.

Central library coordinating agencies for all types of libraries exist in some states, such as New York, Colorado, and Washington, and are being developed in others. The National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) has emphasized the justification, pointing out "that the existing pattern of libraries serving limited geographic areas or various special interests will lead to costly, uneven and wasteful services," unless changed. NCLIS has called on each state to ensure that total library and information resources of the state be used effectively and efficiently.

Academic Libraries and Interlibrary Cooperation

The growth of academic libraries in Alabama has accompanied the phenomenal expansion of the colleges and universities. Bibliographic and service requirements have expanded for each such library. New technologies have been created, extending the potential of service.

The 54 university and college libraries of Alabama, in serving over 120,000 students (full-time equivalent), possess approximately 6,100,000 volumes worth over $100 million housed in space with an estimated replacement value of $64 million. They employ about 784 persons at an annual payroll cost of about $7 million. These figures convey some idea of the immense importance of these libraries to the faculty and students, and increasingly to other patrons beyond their campuses. Their collections as a whole are the richest of the State and constitute an essential resource to the people.

The student bodies and educational programs of the colleges and universities continue to expand. The recent rate of growth of their academic libraries, projected over the next 30-odd years, would quadruple the volumes held and triple their space requirements, with other indices of service increasing as well, even without bringing these libraries to a level corresponding with many in other states. This is a prospect which begs the examination of new instruments for more effective delivery of library services. Current means available for interlibrary cooperation are partial or rudimentary, and are unequal to the promise of developing technologies and organization. Interlibrary loans to and from the academic libraries, for example, are low in volume. Laudable informal cooperative efforts of various kinds between the libraries have been continual but necessarily limited in nature and scope by existing organization and procedures.

The librarians of the universities and colleges have recommended, on occasion, important specific, continuing interlibrary projects, some involving other types of libraries, which have not been subsequently undertaken. One such occasion was the 1972 report of the Committee on Librarians of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education. It seems apparent that lack of organizational means for implementing these recommendations is probably the major factor in the failure to carry them out.

There is no comprehensive plan for cooperative selection of library materials or last-copy custody among the academic libraries. Adequate rapid interlibrary delivery means for exchange of materials is lacking. Isolation from other libraries still remains a dominant feature in the operation of academic libraries, despite recent promising technological developments.

The academic libraries are legally empowered to join in cooperative endeavors, no formal restrictions represent obstacles to their participation, and the state agencies related to educational development, especially the Alabama Commission on Higher Education and the State Department of Education, have been supportive of initiatives over the years.

The future cooperative needs of academic libraries may require statewide as well as substate cooperative organization, in addition to Alabama's participation in the prospective development of multistate and national library programs and cooperatives.

Public Libraries in Alabama

Public libraries in Alabama have usually been established as a result of grass-roots, citizen action. The movement for such libraries gained momentum through the gifts of Andrew Carnegie early in this century, the assumption of greater responsibility by cities and subsequently counties, and the creation by state government of what is now the Alabama Public Library Service. The public libraries remain firmly a part of local government, with strong sentiments existing for their continued independence from central control, as is the case for all other types of libraries.

For decades the emphasis given to public library development was in opening up service to all Alabamians, rural as well as urban. The national legislation sponsored in the Congress by Senator Lister Hill and Representative Carl Elliott furthered these endeavors, first in the rural areas and small towns and subsequently in the urban areas, too. Today most areas of the state are served by public libraries, and the emphasis gradually has shifted to the quality of service and to the achievement of a minimum level of service regardless of where a person might live. The following information illustrates the greatly improved position of public library service compared to previous decades of this century.

There are now 180 public libraries in Alabama, together with 61 fixed branches and 42 bookmobiles, a total of 283 outlets. These libraries

possess approximately 5,100,000 books worth over $86 million (at recent average retail prices of $17 per book). They are housed in buildings with a total replacement value of about $42 million. They employ about 869 persons with an annual payroll of approximately $6 million.

The services of these libraries are continually expanding in response to public need. In 1976-1977, book circulations was 14,511,466, a creditable figure. Services in nonbook collections, a result in part of the nation's expanding technologies, are growing especially fast, with the libraries now offering 75,470 phonograph records, 143,379 microforms, 48,189 nonbook items, and 8,778 newspaper and periodical titles. In fact, 16 percent of 1976-1977 expenditures for library materials were in the nonbook areas. The public libraries clearly have assumed a key role in the lives of the people of Alabama.

The Organization of Public Libraries

Public libraries in Alabama are organized in four basic patterns: city libraries (149), county libraries (23), city-county libraries (7), and city-school library (1), a total of 180. Additionally, 88 of these libraries have voluntarily joined together in 24 regionally libraries in order to improve services beyond what they can do in isolated fashion.

The involvement of local governments in public library operations is so varied as to defy simple presentation. Over half of the county governments (37), for example, have no libraries of their own but most nevertheless participate in the regional cooperative libraries. In fact, 36 of the 67 counties have not appointed members to local boards. Some have libraries without city participation, others join with cities, as shown in the numbers above.

Some county governments, approximately 30, appropriate funds to city libraries without participating in the governance, often for the purpose of strengthening rural as well as urban service. A few counties (six or seven) give no financial assistance to public libraries.

Until county governments began to accept responsibility for library service, a trend largely of the past two decades, cities assumed it alone. There are now 157 cities sponsoring public libraries, of which 8 are

joined with a county or school board in so doing. About 100 other cities do not participate, even though some are large enough to make substantial contributions and most receive service in varying degrees.

It is clear that the basic sponsorship of public libraries, even after nearly a century of development, has not yet been completed. Indeed, the changing environment has raised new questions and suggested new patterns of local support. In this regard the public libraries are distinctly different than the other types of libraries--academic, school, and special--which face no such problems.

The regional libraries, especially the multicounty ones, have served particularly to develop rural and small-city service in Alabama, to bring county governments into the sponsorship and joint funding of public libraries, and to spread the concept of interlibrary cooperation. At the same time, the nature of the organization has often brought about an aspect of dependency on the part of the smaller libraries. However, as these smaller libraries have developed, many have become capable of more independent participation and become desirous of a greater role in program development. Furthermore, in many regional libraries the city library boards have been excluded from the governance of the regional libraries, a debilitating factor in library growth. This form of single-type library cooperation appears to have matured and faces inevitable change. It has served well for public library development, but the rationale for its continuance is fading.

The Services of Public Libraries

The public libraries reported total volumes held numbering 5,073,144 in the fall of 1977. This represented 1.47 volumes per capita, a new high for the State as a whole. This total had been raised by an excellent increase of 6.6 percent (314,679 volumes) in the preceding year. Nevertheless, the total is well below the modest goal of 1.8 volumes per capita. The percent of operating expenses used for library materials in 1976-1977 was 16.3, comparing favorably with other states, and underscoring the intention of public libraries generally in Alabama to improve collections better to meet public demand.

As already mentioned, audio-visual materials are receiving much greater emphasis. Individual library collections have been augmented in the case of films by a cooperative film circuit among public libraries and a film service of the Alabama Public Library Service, the circulation of each having doubled every two or three years during the 1970's. These activities provide an example of the favorable potential of cooperative efforts.

Public library hours have steadily improved but, in 1975-76, 55 of 171 public libraries reporting failed to meet standards and collectively were deficient by a combined weekly total of 514 hours.

Hundreds of thousands of Alabamians were not able to visit their libraries on an adequate schedule. Due to few or no open hours evenings, Saturdays, and Sundays in many libraries, working people in particular were denied satisfactory service. While scheduling might have been a factor in some cases, lack of operating funds probably was the root cause of the reduced hours.

Rural library service has vastly improved in Alabama in the past two decades since the Lister Hill and Carl Elliott program was adopted by Congress and vigorously promoted by the Alabama Public Library Service. Fifty of the 67 counties were being served by bookmobiles in 1977, constituting 87.1 percent of the State's population. Circulation in rural areas was estimated at 3.5 million books. Potential for much greater service still exists, as indicated by the greatly varying bookmobile programs of the various libraries. Books-by-mail is a relatively new program, with Tuscaloosa leading all other public libraries in its development.

Space and Staff

Lack of building space is a particularly severe restriction to the improvement of public library service. A 1976 deficiency of 404,453 square feet was derived from adopted standards based on 1970 population which at $40 per square foot represented a capital need of $16,178,120. A projection of minimum need to the year 2020, in 1977 dollars, comes to $46,994,160.

The quality of the services of the public libraries depends heavily upon the personnel. The public libraries collectively are staffed at only one-half the adopted standards. Especially lacking, in sharp contrast to other types of libraries, are graduates of library schools. Even if the standards are applied only to the urban population of the state, the number of library employees are only about 80 percent of the number believed necessary. Though the state standards for personnel might be thought unrealistically high by some, the actual number falls so short of these figures that the results in lowered service are clearly evident, such as in hours of service as already mentioned.

Financial Support of Public Libraries

The financial support of public libraries in Alabama has grown steadily. Nevertheless, in 1975 these libraries received $2.58 per capita compared to the $3.63 average of 11 southeastern states (not including Florida). Public library revenues increased to $11,061,535 in 1976-1977, representing $3.02 per capita and a slight gain above the rate of inflation since 1975. As long as the rate of increase in per capita income in Alabama exceeds that of the United States and of the average in the southeast, as it has in recent years, a base exists for improving the share of public monies allocated to public library service.

The cities are still financing about 82 percent of local costs of Alabama's public libraries, with the counties appropriating most of the remainder. County participation is more recent in origin. A strong case can be made for even greater financial participation by counties, with the future of public libraries depending greatly upon this. Eventually the proportion of support by counties and cities may be the reverse of that presently provided.

Wide variations currently exist in local per capita appropriations to public libraries in comparison to ability to pay as evidenced by per capita incomes in the several counties. For example, the county ranking 45th in per capita income in Alabama was number 1 in 1977 in local per capita appropriations to public libraries. In another example,

the poorest county in the state ranked number 14 in public library support. In contrast, the county 5th in income per capita ranked 39th in library support. The references to county support, in these cases, mean that of the county and all city governments in said county which appropriated funds to public libraries.

The State has substantially increased its financial contribution to public libraries in recent years, and its continuation will bring further development, especially if related to local funding effort, based on per capita income and distributed directly to each library.

Interlibrary Cooperation Among Public Libraries

The public libraries have steadily improved interlibrary cooperation as programs and funds have increased. The concept is firmly espoused in the public library community. The activities of the Alabama Public Library Service, growing steadily over the years, have greatly assisted the public librarians in this matter.

There is no serious obstacle to public libraries promoting and joining in multitype library cooperatives, as this does not require that existing organizational arrangements be dismantled.

The Development of School Libraries in Alabama

The school systems of Alabama, after initially depending primarily upon public libraries to serve their pupils, began several decades ago to establish central libraries in each school. This became general practice in the past two decades, and especially after school accreditation standards so recommended and state school funding became adequate for the purpose. The State Department of Education first appointed a school library supervisor to its staff in 1927, and over the years has continued to increase its emphasis on the essentiality of libraries in the educational process.

In 1977 there were 127 school systems in Alabama, with 1,310 schools serving 776,000 pupils (about 25 percent of the population). Of these schools 975 were accredited and therefore had libraries meeting standards. Most of the remainder had growing library programs, and a

total of 1,180 persons with library science or media endorsement were employed. Within a few years the State Department of Education expects all schools to have libraries acceptable under accreditation standards. At that time the major developmental stage for school libraries will have been completed and factors of quality rather than establishment will dominate the future. In this respect the schools will have joined the academic libraries, leaving only the public libraries with major developmental problems.

Supervision of School Libraries

The largest school systems, where library progress has been more rapid, have created and filled the position of library/media supervisor, as recommended by the related guidelines approved by the State Board of Education. The accreditation standards do not yet deal with this. The designation of such supervisor is clearly as essential for interlibrary cooperation as for intrasystem needs. Over 100 school systems had not yet taken this step in 1977.

Services of School Libraries

The school libraries of Alabama possess approximately 8,200,000 books, slightly more than 10 per pupil. Additionally they are extensively supplied with audio-visual materials designed for classroom and individual learning. These are housed, along with space for their utilization, in approximately 2,500,000 square feet of building space. The total outlay for materials currently held is estimated at about $200 million and the replacement value of the space is estimated to be $100 million. These investments, along with annual operating costs for personnel and facilities of nearly $20 million, emphasize the importance of library service in the educational process. Generations of Americans will now be forthcoming with a background of use and knowledge of libraries that will effect not only their own lives and the society of which they are a part, but also the total demands placed on libraries throughout their lifetimes.

School Library Financing

The allocation of funds to school libraries is the responsibility of the local school boards in accordance with the standards adopted by the State Department of Education. Funding of Alabama's public schools by the State has increased dramatically in recent years, which has enabled the school boards to strengthen the school libraries. In the one year from 1975-1976 to 1976-1977, for example, expenditures for library materials increased from $2,590,965 to $3,307,813. However, the amount per student still varies greatly among school systems, and even more widely among individual schools. Nevertheless, the overall financial prospects are good, and as they become more evenly applied for library operations will also further increase the prospects for interlibrary cooperation.

Intercerlibrary Cooperation

As pointed out, intralibrary cooperation is still rudimentary and informal even within some school systems, largely because the concept of a library/media supervisor as recommended by the State Board of Education has not been acted upon by about 80 percent of the school systems. Interlibrary cooperation between school systems, for all practical purposes, largely remains to be developed at this point in time.

However, interlibrary cooperation between schools and public libraries has a long history in some areas, and important instances also exist of cooperation between school and academic libraries, usually aided in both cases by proximity and common service areas. These arrangements have usually been informal in nature but occasionally of long standing, and directed almost wholly to the pupils' benefit. Much more can be done.

School libraries, in their more developed state, also may be expected to reexamine their potential for serving a wider public in addition to their primary clientele, especially through cooperative action with other types of libraries. Possessing more materials than any other type of library, albeit specialized and repetitive to an important degree, the responsibility and potential on behalf of the larger population of Alabama will probably be found quite substantial.

School boards' active participation in the governance of multi-type library systems would be normal and desirable.

Special Libraries in Alabama

Especially rich library resources are to be found in certain of the special libraries of Alabama. Some of the strongest are federally sponsored, others state sponsored. Their participation in cooperative library systems is clearly to the advantage of these libraries and to the broader society which nourishes them. Privately sponsored special libraries, judging from experience in other states, pose no significant problems in working with publicly sponsored libraries in cooperative endeavors.

The number of special libraries in Alabama is unknown. A partial list of over 100 libraries was compiled during the study, and reveals a great variety of missions and collections. They are unique among the four types of libraries in that there is no uniform pattern of sponsorship and funding. Some on the list would be excellent candidates for the "giving and receiving" of library services in a cooperative. Others would be more fitted for affiliate membership. Requirements for membership, if initially strict, could be relaxed later if experience so indicated. Four important requirements for consideration are: (a) public use of the library on premises under reasonable rules, (b) availability on loan of a "reasonable" percentage of the collection, (c) acceptance of reciprocal borrowing, and (d) response to interlibrary loan requests upon an agreed basis. The preparation of suggested criteria for special library membership could be followed by a review of the library community, adoption, and subsequent monitoring for possible changes.

While special libraries tend to be located in the largest urban centers, their distribution throughout the State is wide enough to include some in each of five proposed cooperative library systems.

A role in the governance of cooperative systems would strengthen the participation of special libraries.

In the course of this study, numbers from four to eight were considered, with the greatest advantages accruing to five. Four, seven, and eight were excluded. The first was rejected because of administrative disadvantages of so few in working with the state library, as well as factors of distance and desirable combination of libraries. Seven and eight had "fatal" flaws of weakness in number, size, library distribution, and staffing. In the end, five systems offered more advantages than six on nearly all counts. Lastly, after experience, it is organizationally easier to increase the number than to decrease it.

District boundaries should not be considered "iron curtains"; cooperation between systems is feasible. Experience in other states indicates that concern with these boundaries, in the sense of separating close neighbors, is misplaced, even in metropolitan areas.

Structuring Alabama's Library Systems

The essential elements of cooperative library systems in Alabama are viewed as both substate and statewide, the first operated on the basis of geographical subdivisions of the State, and the second on the basis of specific programs organized on the basis of their particular needs.

The law of the State, to enable the creation of adequate systems, requires change, including the placement of central coordinating responsibility in a single state agency and the authority to fund cooperative endeavors involving all types of libraries.

The approach appearing most favorable to Alabama involves the creation and governance of system organizations by the libraries and their sponsoring authorities, and the maintenance of creative agreements with the State on operations and intersystem cooperation in return for state funding and technical aid. The pattern should provide for a balanced participation of all parties aimed at constructive action and not stagnation from opposing forces.

The district systems would be operated under the general policy authority of representatives of library sponsoring agencies, directed by a professional staff, and require the participation and oversight of

member library directors and staff in program formulation and execution. These concepts are reflected in the specific recommendations for system governance and embodied in proposed changes in state law, in the proposals for rules and regulations of the state library, and in suggested bylaws for system governance.

The formulation of a structure of cooperative library systems as proposed has taken into account the history, development, and current situation of libraries in Alabama in order to take full advantage of the achievements to date and avoid unnecessary dislocation of existing arrangements. Conditions appear very favorable, in the opinion of the consultant, for the establishment and operation of an outstanding program of library development in Alabama through the strongest means available--joint library action.

The Number and Boundaries of Library Systems

There are several factors logically influencing the selection of the geographical areas of library systems, including population served, library resources, number and types of libraries, area in square miles, political boundaries, road communications, and growth projections. Furthermore, a certain minimum size is required to sustain a strong and varied system staff capable of carrying out the sophisticated programs to be adopted. Balance among these factors requires compromise.

Major Recommendations

I. A Plan for Cooperative Library Systems

1. Comprehensive Approach to Library Development - The planning and development of libraries in the State should be comprehensive in scope in order to include all types of libraries--academic, public, school, and special--and to make their services correspond fully to the needs of the public in complementary and mutually beneficial ways.

2. Role for State Government - The State of Alabama should assume the central role of coordinating and assisting the libraries in such joint effort, an essential element for successful operations.

3. Alabama State Library - The Alabama Public Library Service should be redesignated the Alabama State Library and given broad responsibilities for carrying out the central role of the State.

4. Library Role of Other State Agencies - The present authority of all other state agencies with the library development and operation, especially those of the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education, should be maintained and their library programs strengthened as necessary for academic and school libraries to participate in and benefit from cooperative library efforts.

5. Retained Authority of Libraries - The current authority of all publicly sponsored libraries--academic, public, school, and special--should be maintained, thereby preserving their discretion for participation in combined library endeavors.

6. Participation of Privately Sponsored Libraries - Privately sponsored libraries, with their valuable resources, should be encouraged to participate in and reinforce the cooperative programs of publicly supported libraries.

7. Improved Library Statistics - The newly created Alabama State Library should be given authority to collect and publish library information and statistics from all state-supported libraries in order to assist the State, library organizations, and individual libraries to plan and carry out the most effective programs possible with the resources available, and to encourage federal and privately supported libraries to participate.

8. State Legislation to Encourage Library Cooperation - Current legislation (Sections 41-8-1 through 8 of the Alabama Code) should be amended to authorize the proposed Alabama State Library to encourage and assist in the establishment and maintenance of voluntary cooperative library systems composed of all types of libraries, adopt rules and regulations pertaining thereto, and define system boundaries geographically when applicable; such systems also should be designated public libraries for the purpose of interstate library cooperation under Alabama law.

9. Advisory Board to State Library - To bring all interested parties formally into the process of formulating statewide policies for library cooperation, an Advisory Board to the Executive Board of the Alabama State Library should be created, of 11 members, to include members of system library boards, a library educator, and officials of other state agencies, especially of the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education.

10. Responsibilities of State Library Director - The position of Director of the State Library should be created, filled by the Executive Board, and charged with representing the state government in developing and carrying out a library program in cooperation with all types of libraries; the Director should be charged with overall state library planning and coordination, and administration of financial and technical assistance to cooperative library systems, in addition to the traditional responsibility of furthering the development of public libraries.

11. Committees of Librarians - Committees and task forces of librarians, library board members, and interested officials and citizens should be formed to assist the State Library in formulating cooperative policy and implementing adopted programs.

12. District-System Numbers and Boundaries - The State should be divided into five geographical districts, along county lines, for the purpose of organizing and carrying out cooperative library systems, taking into consideration for that purpose relative population and staffing requirements, number and size of libraries of each type, total number of libraries, library resources, size of the geographical area, and other pertinent factors.

13. Local Governance of Cooperative Systems and Open Membership - The organization and operation of a District Library System should be carried out exclusively by representatives of libraries located within the area on a voluntary basis without modification of any member library's legal authority; all libraries meeting established requirements should be eligible to membership.

14. District Assembly as Representative Body - To organize a District Library System to operate in cooperation with the State and other such systems, the sponsoring authority of each library (library board member, school board member, academic board member or official, etc.) should be empowered to designate a representative to the District Assembly for organizing and maintaining a cooperative district library system, electing the members of the District Board of Trustees, reviewing programs and progress, making recommendations for improvements, and interpreting system programs to their organizations and the public.

15. Board of Trustees as District Governing Authority - Each District Library System should be headed by a Board of Trustees elected by the District Assembly from among its own members to be the governing authority of the district; the Board should be composed of nine members with representation from all types of libraries.

16. Powers of District Board of Trustees - The District Board of Trustees should be authorized to appoint and supervise a Director of the library system, determine the policies of the system, approve the program and budget for improving library service throughout the district, and involve all member libraries in the process.

17. Role of the Director of District Library System - The position of Director of a District Library System should be provided with authority to appoint necessary staff, coordinate the efforts of member libraries in developing cooperative library programs, carry out adopted programs, and appoint an advisory committee and such other committees representing system members as desirable to preserve and benefit from the cooperative nature of the organization.

18. Plan of System Service - Each system should prepare and update annually a long-range plan of service with annual increments (the first year serving as a detailed annual plan) as the principal administrative means for involving system membership in the program decision-making process, for cooperating with other district systems and the State Library, and for justifying state financial and technical assistance.

19. Intersystem Cooperation and Statewide Cooperative Programs - The State Library should encourage and support intersystem cooperation in the sharing of library resources and services, participates in approved cooperative programs organized on a statewide or special-purpose basis rather than a district basis whenever justified by need and superior results, and prepares long-range and annual plans for such intersystem and statewide services.

20. Implementing Rules of the Executive Board of the State Library - The Executive Board should be authorized to adopt rules for state participation in cooperative library systems in accordance with law and as deemed necessary for achieving reasonable uniformity and quality of service in the several district systems, for reporting of performance, and for financial accountability; the rules should be promulgated by the Director of the State Library.

21. Regulations of the Director of the State Library - The Director of the State Library should interpret and administer the state law and the rules of the Executive Board and be authorized to issue regulations for that purpose to include provisions for preparing the plan of service, financial management, cooperative procedures, and statistical reporting as needed to further the objectives of the cooperating libraries.

22. Bylaws of the District Library Systems - Bylaws should be adopted by the Board of Trustees of each library system as part of the process of cooperative understanding and administrative consonance with other systems and with the State Library in the joint endeavors being undertaken.

The following charts present graphically the organizational elements of the cooperative structure recommended. Chart I presents the organization at the state level, Chart II at the district system level.

II. Academic Libraries and Cooperative Systems

23. The Expanding Role of Academic Libraries - Academic libraries should assume a key role in organizing state-supported systems of interlibrary cooperation in view both of their own prospective large expansion for serving higher education and of the needs of the State as a whole which cannot otherwise be adequately served.

24. Service to the Wider Public - Noncampus patrons, who represent their secondary clientele, should be encouraged in access to each academic library's resources, including reciprocal borrowing and interlibrary loan.

25. Cooperative Plan of Acquisitions and Resource Sharing - Academic libraries should join with other types of libraries, especially the large public libraries, in developing a statewide plan of acquisitions of library materials aimed at enriching the total resources available in the State and of methods to improve their utilization.

26. Preservation of Older Materials - To forestall unnecessary new library construction and assure availability of older publications, a joint plan with other types of libraries should be adopted for last-copy retention and custody of little-used materials.

27. New Plans Related to Cooperation - Upon adoption of multitype library systems the 1972 report of the Council of Librarians for the development of academic libraries should be updated to take into consideration the new and greater potential in cooperative action.

28. Statewide Cooperative Means when Desirable - Academic libraries should espouse statewide cooperative endeavors whenever organization on a substate or district basis is not appropriate.

Chart I

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION AT STATE LEVEL
FOR INTERLIBRARY COOPERATION

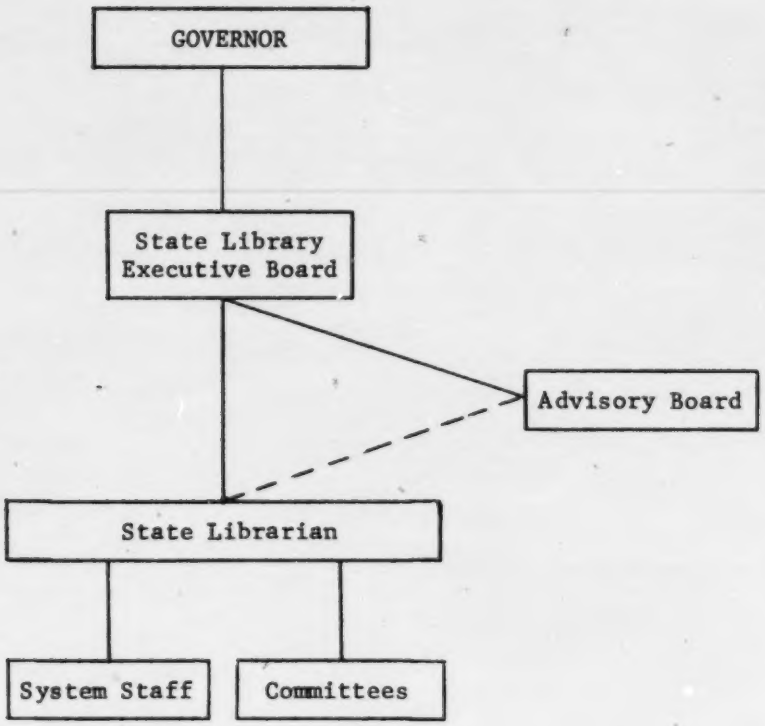
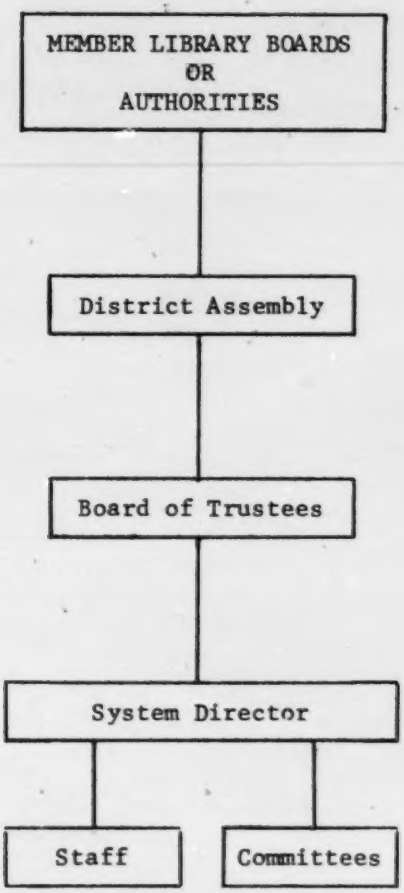


Chart II

PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF A DISTRICT LIBRARY SYSTEM



29. Support for Informing the Public - Academic libraries should join with other libraries in collecting and presenting data for a comprehensive view of library operations in the State and their significance to the people.

30. Strengthening Mutual Concerns with State Agencies - The academic libraries should encourage a greater supportive role by the Commission on Higher Education and the Department of Education as needed to undergird cooperative endeavors.

III. Public Libraries and Cooperative Systems

31. Complete the Organizational Basis for Public Libraries - The fundamental organizational basis for public libraries should be completed as soon as possible, especially by creating county library boards in the remaining 37 counties which do not have them, either by means of separate library boards or jointly with one or more cities, thereby strengthening cooperative potential.

32. A Comprehensive Plan for Rural Service - A broad plan for future development of library service in rural areas should be prepared, taking into account the need for uniformity in service levels and comparability of costs and means, and as quickly as possible bring to a successful conclusion the long-sustained effort to equalize in feasible degree urban and rural library service in Alabama.

33. Participation in Cooperative Systems - Public libraries should join with other types of libraries in creating cooperative systems, governed by their member libraries and with open and voluntary membership.

34. Maintenance of Existing Regional Libraries - Regional public libraries should remain intact as presently organized until such time that their membership may wish to modify them.

35. State Financial Support to Public Libraries - The organization of cooperative library systems should not serve to reduce the appropriations of state funds needed to assist in the development of public libraries.

36. Improved Local Funding - Local funding of public libraries as a whole should be related more evenly with ability to pay and substantially raised, with county governments generally increasing their appropriations relative to cities; state aid should be tied to local effort in order to improve incentive and make public library service more uniform throughout the State.

37. Improved Library Hours - As revenues increase, many public libraries should offer more adequate evenings, Saturday, and Sunday hours to patrons, as well as total hours per week.

38. More Library Space - A statewide building plan should be prepared to correct the lack of space which currently is greatly limiting many libraries in their efforts to serve the people, followed by state appropriations to assist local governments in public library construction.

39. Improved Collections - Since most public libraries are still substantially below the modest goals adopted for their book collections, an increase statewide in appropriations for library materials generally should be encouraged.

40. Improved Staff Qualifications - Higher salaries should be offered in most public libraries in order that professional standards may be raised, enabling the public libraries to work more effectively with other types that are currently better staffed overall.

IV. School Libraries and Cooperative Systems

41. Participation in Library Systems - School libraries, which recently have increased importantly in number and quality, should obtain full advantage of voluntary membership with other types of libraries in cooperative systems; such cooperation should be encouraged in the library/media guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.

42. Role of School Boards - School boards should participate in system governance by representation from their number on the District Assembly and the Board of Trusteees of such cooperative library systems.

43. Library Coordination in Schools - Coordination of school libraries at school system or intersystem level, as currently proposed by the library/media guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education, should be included in the accreditation standards in a separate section related to system-level goals and procedures.

44. School-System Library Supervisor - Each school system's library/media supervisor should be the principal professional channel for participation in multitype library activities.

45. Broader Public Service Role for School Libraries - Consideration should be given to making the resources of school libraries more readily available to the public through cooperative library systems.

46. Staff Development - School libraries should participate in and benefit from the staff development programs of cooperative library systems.

47. Joint Planning at the State Level - The State Department of Education, on behalf of all school libraries, should join with the State Library in developing compatible joint policies and in sustaining the voluntary efforts of schools in multitype library systems.

V. Special Libraries and Cooperative Systems

48. System Participation of Special Libraries - Special libraries, with their great diversity in purpose and sponsorship, should be invited to participate in cooperative library systems whenever mutual benefits are substantially derived, and be represented in system governance.

49. Contributions of Special Libraries - As with other types of libraries, special libraries joining in a cooperative system should give reasonable public access to their collections, participate in reciprocal borrowing, and make interlibrary loans.

50. Statewide Library Statistics - Special libraries should join in efforts to prepare and publish more complete data on library operations in Alabama, and this should be a condition of system membership.

51. Joint Acquisition Policies - Special libraries should be invited to join in formulating joint acquisition policies for library materials where appropriate.